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HYMNS AND THEIR AUTHORS



HYMNS

AND THEIR AUTHORS

How some of our
best known Hymns
came to be written

✓ BY

W. JONES and W. P. ROBINSON

LIVERPOOL
A. WOOD AND COMPANY

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DEDICATED

to

WINNIE and ALECK NICOL

TORONTO, CANADA.

by

W. JONES & W. P. ROBINSON,

LIVERPOOL.

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INTRODUCTION

Hymns, what they are and how they started.

I suppose most of you as children, you younger ones especially, regard religion as something rather boring and uninteresting.

You will look upon the Sunday School and Church as places where your parents force you to attend and naturally this does not always go down very well when the weather is fine and sunny and there are lots of more exciting things to do outside.

The very word "religion" probably conjures up for you memories of long prayers and dull sermons, the only relief coming at the announcement of a hymn which is possibly the only time in the service when you begin to pay attention.

At least the Hymn is usually bright and cheerful—two characteristics which please you, and I think it is true to say that at this stage in your religious life, the hymn probably makes the biggest impression of all.

Most children memorize a portion of their favourite hymns, and this really is very important, because once learned they are rarely forgotten. Since each hymn is a prayer or sermon condensed into a few verses you will understand what is meant by our statement regarding importance.

It is a difficult task indeed to keep a large class of children interested in religion unless the teacher or speaker is particularly gifted in the art of addressing young people and it is this fact which also makes the Hymn so useful because its appeal is universal and it embraces all ages of young people and binds them together.

The actual meaning of prayer and worship haven't really found a place in the minds of most children because most things that have happened have been good ones and they haven't had to face real trouble beyond having a tooth out or possibly being punished for some act of mischief. They are not concerned about life after death only in a very confused sort of way. They are only just starting to live.

If you are a teacher, your main difficulty is to try and bring home to the child the fact that Christianity isn't dull and boring at all. It is really a vital and exciting thing. People have fought and died, endured terrible tortures, and thus became martyrs for their Christian beliefs. You will understand that courage and heroism are outstanding factors in the character of a true follower of Christ.

I am sure that most of us at some time or other in our lives have praised and loved something beautiful. It might have been the countryside in summer, a snowfall in winter, or even a household pet. You have loved it for what it is—a creation of God's wonderful power. Christians in the past, have appreciated love and beauty in all its forms and as a result many stories, prayers, songs and hymns have been written or composed. These have been handed down for future generations and they remain to-day as they always

have been, an everlasting record of the place love and beauty have in Christianity.

The remarkable thing about all this is surely that the principles we have mentioned of courage and heroism, love, appreciation of beauty, never grow dim, and they are as necessary to a good life to-day as never before and there is always opportunity to put them into practice. It is up to you, as it was in the old days, to do something good in your lives, to leave something in the records that will be of benefit to mankind in the future, asking no reward or credit. This is true religion and you will very quickly change your mind from the attitude adopted before, that it was so dull and uninteresting.

It is difficult amongst young people especially, to tell which attracts them most in the Hymn, the words or the tune. As they grow older, the words assume a greater importance than they did when youth was on their side. Some tunes are written specially to suit the Hymn. One can quote as a modern example, Blakes "Jerusalem" or the ever popular "Onward Christian Soldiers." Neither of these would sound the same if sung to another tune. However, in our Hymn books, we can find certain tunes which can be used for a number of Hymns written in the same metre, for example there are a lot of tunes in the index marked C.M. or L.M. (common metre or long metre). When a Hymn is chosen the organist knows that he can choose any tune with the same metre, and the words will fit. Normally he chooses a tune which is well known to the congregation so that everyone can join in.

Our aim, however, should be to make both parts of the hymn, i.e., words and music one undivided unit—a fine tune and lovely inspiring words—a grand Hymn so that if later you happen to sing a tune casually to yourself, whether this be at work or play, the words also will automatically associate themselves with you at the same time. Try to think on the words because in a lot of cases these might be a little harder to understand than the tune, but once you have associated yourself with both and learned a little about the background of the Hymn — you have really obtained a little treasure.

If you take your dictionary and look up the word "Hymn" this is described as a "song of praise" in the noun form and to celebrate in song or sing in praise or adoration as a verb. We can go back to very early times—long before Jesus came on earth in human form, when heathen worship dominated the peoples of many countries and it was obvious that mankind was really short of a great religious leader. Many of the tribes worshipped the elements of nature which affected them most. The sun and rain which gave them good crops, they must thank them with songs and sacrifices. The bad elements, thunder, lightning, the wind and drought must also be appeased and worshipped so that they wouldn't be angry and bring destruction to the tribe.

So, many primitive forms of worship sprang up. There would be tribal dances, and of course music, which might be in the form of chanting or singing in the case of the more advanced peoples

and drum or tom-tom beating amongst some of the backward tribes. This chanting could hardly be described as Hymn singing as we know it to-day in our churches and schools, but according to our friend the dictionary, these men and women in their own style were singing songs of praise to their gods and I think we are quite entitled to call this a form of Hymn singing.

As man through his great powers of reasoning and intellect slowly became enlightened, and some form of education spread over large areas of the globe, music became more organized and songs were handed down amongst peoples and actually became recognizable as such, the words probably recording some great victory in battle or perhaps having a religious strain, "Praises to God" or the forecast of a new leader for the World. Thus we find that probably the oldest recorded Hymns were those sung by the Jews — the Psalms, or sacred songs to which we can refer in the old Testament in our Bibles and which sang praises to God before the coming of Jesus Christ.. With the coming of the Messiah and the birth of Christianity the spirit of hymn singing was increased. The very early Christians had a wretched time of it in places like Rome where some of those in authority saw in a threat to their own power. They didn't like to think that people were worshipping someone higher than themselves and were greatly puzzled by the fact that these people were prepared to suffer terrible tortures and imprisonment for their faith. The only weapons they had to fight with were courage and bravery, and they kindled a torch, and set an example, which has been burning through dark ages, and years up to the present time.

Perhaps one main reason why these early Christians sang hymns was to bind them closer to one another. As in wartime their terrible experiences, common danger and faith they had, made them united and they put this common fellowship into words and music so that an everlasting record of it could be handed on to future generations. This fashion of Hymn singing and making grew from such small seed until in the years and centuries which followed a vast store of them was built up. "But why" you might ask "did people want to sing—couldn't they just talk to one another and arrive at the same result?" We know that we all like singing when we are happy, but there was much more to it than just happiness, as we have explained, there was terror and sadness, too. These early followers of Christ were trying to mould their lives in His pattern. Some of them had been bad people before, perhaps they had lived lives of selfishness and greed, but now they were new men and women, helping their less fortunate colleagues and doing acts of kindness. Others had been ill for years, just existing in pain, without hope. The Christian message had given them fresh courage and hope and now they felt the surge of new life through their minds and bodies standing poised on the threshold of a changed life. You can well imagine how these people acted. Now they had something positive to live for — yes, every one of them: What an experience some of the changed ones must have gone through and what better way of thanking God for this than by Hymn singing.

“I think when I read that sweet story of old.”

Writer: Jemima Thompson.

*I think when I read that sweet story of old,
 When Jesus was here among men,
 How He called little children as lambs to His fold:
 I should like to have been with them then.
 I wish that His hands had been placed on my head,
 That His arms had been thrown around me,
 And that I might have seen His kind look when He said,
 “Let the little ones come unto Me.”*

*Yet still to His footstool in prayer I may go,
 And ask for a share in His love;
 And if I now earnestly seek Him below,
 I shall see Him and hear Him above,
 In that beautiful place He is gone to prepare,
 For all who are washed and forgiven;
 And many dear children are gathering there,
 “For of such is the kingdom of heaven.”*

*But thousands and thousands who wander and fall,
 Never heard of that heavenly home:
 I should like them to know there is room for them all,
 And that Jesus has bid them to come.
 I long for the joy of that glorious time,
 The sweetest, and brightest, and best,
 When the dear little children of every clime
 Shall crowd to His arms and be blest.*

It is our intention in these opening pages to impress upon you the importance of knowing a little about some of the hymns you love best so that more enjoyment will be found in singing them.

We do want you to understand that writing the beautiful words of which hymns are composed is not altogether something which can be done or acquired by practice or hard work alone. Most of the men and women who have written them have had either a sudden flash of inspiration or genius, or been born with the ability in the form of a talent to compose them. Sometimes the inspiration has come to them suddenly on a journey, maybe a beautiful scene or picture has brought out the wonderful thoughts or possibly more tragic conditions, such as the death of someone dearly loved.

As our remarks are really for the benefit mostly of young people, perhaps an ideal hymn for our opening discussion is one which is much beloved by children and adults all over the world. It is a beautiful hymn made more so by its simplicity and quiet but effective tune. Surely you all must have sung at one time or another those famous lines

The story surrounding this is not particularly exciting or sensational, but none the less quite interesting.

Many years ago in the year 1841 to be precise, a young school teacher, 28 years of age was teaching a class of tiny children attending the local Infants' School, Grays Inn Road, London. Her name was Miss Jemima Thompson, and she had made what was at that time a very costly journey to London in order to improve herself at her profession and obtain any new ideas to take back with her.

An alert woman with a religious turn of mind, she had a great love for music and some of her time was consequently devoted to teaching marching songs to the younger ones which naturally were greatly appreciated by them (how many children don't like marching to music?)

One day she came across a Greek tune which particularly fascinated her. It had a most unusual rhythm. As both teachers and scholars loved it so much, she decided that it would make a wonderful tune for a children's hymn if suitable words could be found. This however was rather unlikely, in view of its strange and irregular beat.

The answer came to her one day in rather unusual circumstances. Shortly after her training period in London had ended, she was invited to attend some missionary meeting at a little town called Wellington. It was about an hour's journey from her own village—where she had been engaged as a teacher in the local children's school.

In those days, of course, the main form of road transport was by stagecoach, a most pleasing method on a beautiful Spring morning, especially when no other passenger was in the coach, and one could be alone with one's thoughts.

Her spirits were high, and as often occurs with people who love music, she started singing, and suddenly realised that the tune was none other than the old Greek marching song she had picked up in London.

It was as though some strange power had come over her, for taking a piece of paper from her pocket, she scribbled down in pencil two verses of one of the most wonderful hymns ever composed for children—an immortal. It was her intention to use the words solely for the benefit of her own children in the village school. Later, under pressure of many requests, she wrote a third verse of a missionary character, so that the hymn eventually found its way abroad, where it has flourished ever since.

Probably this wonderful hymn would have remained practically unknown had it not been for the efforts of Mr. Thompson, her father, who at that time was the Superintendent of the village Sunday School.

It was his custom each Sunday to let the children choose the first hymn of the Service themselves. One day, however, much to his surprise, they all clamoured for the one "teacher has taught us." Although the tune and words were completely unknown to him, he gave them their wish and was so impressed by the result that he made it his business to obtain a copy right away. This he sent on to the "Sunday School Teachers' Magazine," and it is safe to assume that but for this action it would never have appeared in print.

This hymn was a perfect example of inspiration being delivered to a person on the spur of the moment. In her own words "it was a little inspiration from above," she said, and "not in me."

It seems strange indeed that this talented young woman, who at the early age of 13 had articles published in the *Juvenile Magazine*, never composed another hymn. Although she had many contributions published these must have been the result of hard work—the hymn, the result of a touch of genius.

“There’s a Light upon the Mountains.”

Writer : Henry Burton.

*There’s a light upon the mountains, and the day is at the
spring,
When our eyes shall see the beauty and the glory of the
King;
Weary was our heart with waiting, and the night-watch
seemed so long,
But His triumph-day is breaking, and we hail it with a song.*

*In the fading of the starlight we can see the coming morn;
And the lights of men are paling in the splendours of the
dawn;
For the eastern skies are glowing as with lights of hidden fire,
And the hearts of men are stirring with the throb of deep
desire.*

*There’s a hush of expectation, and a quiet in the air;
And the breath of God is moving in the fervent breath of
prayer;
For the suffering, dying Jesus is the Christ upon the throne,
And the travail of our spirits is the travail of His own.*

*He is breaking down the barriers, He is casting up the way;
He is calling for His angels to build up the gates of day;
But His angels here are human, not the shining hosts above,
For the drum-beats of His army are the heart-beats of our
love.*

*Hark! we hear a distant music, and it comes with fuller swell;
'Tis the triumph song of Jesus, of our King Emmanuel;
Zion, go ye forth to meet Him, and my soul, be swift to
bring
All thy sweetest and thy dearest for the triumph of our King.*

In this chapter we are dealing with a man whose background was typical of so many British families in the 1800's, when the call of Young America proved an irresistible lure to any man and wife willing to tear up their roots in the Old Country and pioneer the rich virgin land across the sea.

Henry Burton was born on the 16th November, 1840, number four in a total of seven sons and two daughters, all children of a Leicestershire yeoman, who farmed a large tract of land near the village of Swannington. For several years after his birth, the farm prospered, but misfortunes in the shape of cattle disease started to decimate the once-flourishing herds, and by the time Henry reached the age of 15, his father — depressed and dispirited by his inability to cope with his losses, made the biggest decision of his life. He sold the farm and buildings, and with the money thus obtained, emigrated to America. The party included his wife and himself, nine children and eight farm servants, real stock on which to build a great nation of the future. In those days the voyage across the Atlantic was rather a prolonged affair, and it was six weeks before the party arrived in the New World. A further leisurely journey into the interior brought them eventually to their destination—a large farm situated near the small town of Beloit, Wisconsin.

By this time the latent scholastic talent inherent in young Henry was beginning to show itself, and his father decided to foster the lad's education by enrolling him at Beloit University—a newly established seat of learning and there he soon took his degree. He had a wonderful gift for writing poetry, and very soon this gift was brought to the notice of the local citizens. In the midst of the Abraham Lincoln anti-slave trouble, his poem "Let my people go" appeared in the College magazine. This so impressed in certain circles, that after the poem had been given a wider audience, he was asked to visit Washington to hand a copy of it personally to

the great man Lincoln himself. Unfortunately, he was unable to have audience with the President when he arrived, but strangely enough the Charter of Emancipation was uttered the same week. This Charter was designed as a means of liberating the poor unfortunate coloured people from the yoke of slavery which had hovered over them for so long.

Most emigrants at some time or other in their new lives have a nostalgia—a desire to return to see their old homeland, and this was so in the case of Henry Burton, for in the year 1865 he returned to England and was accepted for the Wesleyan Ministry. This work gave him plenty of scope for travel, and he visited amongst other towns, Newcastle-on-Tyne, Cardiff, Bolton, London, Manchester and Liverpool. It is with the latter great seaport that we are chiefly concerned at the moment, for he was Minister at Mersey Road Church, Blundellsands, from 1899 to 1901. At this point it is of interest, perhaps, to point out that the Liverpool skyline was the last link many of the forefathers of present day Americans had of their native country, whilst it is also the first glimpse of England for many incoming tourists today.

At one period of his stay in the Liverpool area he took a house at West Kirby—a small residential area situated at the mouth of the River Dee, which River, along with its twin sister, the Mersey, encloses what is known as the Wirral Peninsula, nowadays a favourite spot for Liverpool picnickers and ramblers. Although most of the country hereabouts is flat, the land rises quite steeply on the outskirts of West Kirby. It was to the top of this hill that Henry Burton used to climb and admire the wonderful view of the Welsh hills which dominate the opposite side of the estuary. Perhaps his favourite time for this was that period of great silence which precedes the dawn — that period which is

neither night nor morning, when man's mind can be so easily emptied of earthly things and focussed on the power of God instead. That wonderful hymn "There's a light upon the mountains" was inspired on one of these occasions. In it one can visualize the wonderful sight slowly unfolding before his eyes, as the starlight faded and the fresh clean light of day, nurtured by the rising sun, brought to life those lovely green hills of Wales. The hymn is a great song of triumph for Christ's Kingdom on Earth, and what better way of bringing the point home to all men than the comparison with the birth and splendour of the new day.

Other hymns of his include "Break—day of God" which he wrote on the railway bridge at Blundellsands—once more under the inspiration brought by the dawn of a new day. He also wrote "O King of Kings" at the request of the great organist and composer, Sir John Stainer. Music and words had been written for a Jubilee Ode sung by massed choirs in 1887, and as Stainer wanted the tune to live on, his friend composed this hymn to the same metre. The tune is now known as "Rex Regum."

In addition to hymns, Henry Burton wrote the Expositor's Bible "St. Luke," a volume of sermons called "The coming of the Kingdom" and "Wayside Songs." Unfortunately he belonged to another age, and with the exception of his best known hymns, his sermons and poetry are now chiefly banished to second-hand bookstalls, a poor reward one might say for such efforts this man made to give colour and beauty to drab human lives.

Henry Burton died in the year 1930 at the ripe old age of 90—no doubt a happy and contented follower of Christ.

“There is a Happy Land.”

Writer: Andrew Young.

*There is a happy land,
Far, far away,
Where saints in glory stand,
Bright, bright as day.
Oh, how they sweetly sing,
Worthy is our Saviour King!
Loud let His praises ring—
Praise, praise for aye!*

*Come to this happy land,
Come, come away:
Why will ye doubting stand?
Why still delay?
Oh, we shall happy be,
When, from sin and sorrow free,
Lord, we shall live with Thee,
Blest, blest for aye!*

*Bright in that happy land
Beams every eye;
Kept by a Father's hand,
Love cannot die:
On then to glory run,
Be a crown, a kingdom won;
And bright above the sun
Reign, reign for aye.*

We have chosen this hymn for discussion because in some ways it is unique. It was written by a man named Andrew Young, a very clever man with a good education. However, as in the case of many other people of similar standing, this is the only hymn of his which became really famous. He did write many others, but these have slowly disappeared and are now almost unknown. The hymn is unique by the fact that its very simplicity in both words and tune has had rather an adverse effect on its importance. At one time it was what we might call a "sentimental" hymn and one which brought tears of emotion to a congregation listening to or singing it. Unfortunately, as the years have passed by it has lost some of its atmosphere, and sad to relate has been maltreated and ridiculed to an enormous extent. People have used the opening lines in all sorts of circumstances, and amended the remaining words of the hymn, even going as far as using it for a humorous number in a variety concert.

Nevertheless, we should not be too pessimistic about its apparent abuse, because it is still a great favourite with children and in its very simplicity lies its strength. The strange thing is that many other hymns equally as simple and easy to pick up have retained their dignity and atmosphere.

The words of "There is a happy land" were written not as a result of any particular inspiration or happening, but solely as a convenience and as a means of preserving a certain tune which had favourably impressed the writer.

Mr. Young was born in 1807, the son of a school teacher and "like father, like son" as the old saying goes it was intended that he also should take up a similar career. He graduated at Edinburgh University, and in the year 1830 achieved one of his ambitions, when he was appointed headmaster of Niddry St. School, Edinburgh. His powers of

leadership and the art of passing on his knowledge to others must have been extraordinary, for during the 10 years he held this position at the school, the number of pupils increased steadily from 80 to 600 — a remarkable record.

It was in 1838 that he decided to spend a holiday with some of his pupils at one of their homes in one of Scotland's beauty spots, Rothesay, situated on the Island of Bute in the Firth of Clyde. One evening after supper and prior to retiring for the night, the boys and the master were having a short sing-song. The pianist, Mrs. Marshall, played several popular tunes and at the same time introduced an old Indian air to them which greatly pleased Mr. Young. He asked what the tune was called and was told "Happy Land." "This could be a great hit with the children" was his main thought, and being of a religious nature, he decided there and then to write suitable words to fit it and make it available for Sunday Schools. He used the name of the tune as a theme for the words, and very quickly the hymn became exceedingly popular with his pupils, who sang it daily in their classes. Eventually its popularity spread throughout the Christian World, and it was even translated into several languages.

After his period as headmaster at Niddry St. School, he was appointed principal English master of Madras College in the University of St. Andrew's and remained there for thirteen years until his retirement in 1853. Even then his life's work was not complete, and he carried on in Edinburgh as superintendent of a Sunday School, and an elder of Green-side Parish Church, for a further thirty years. In his later years, he was a well-known figure in the famous Princes St. Gardens, where he could usually be found with a flock of birds fluttering round him for the tasty morsels he brought along with him. He became a Fellow of the Royal Society, the Royal Geographical Society, and also acted as librarian of the Philosophical Institution of Edinburgh. However, in

spite of the good work he had done, and the prominent positions he had held, Andrew Young finished his life penniless and friendless, a situation hardly befitting such a good man.

What a pity that the small gift he left behind for the benefit of his fellow men should now be so little appreciated! So when singing or reading this hymn next time please do try and remember that it was the work of a very kind and worthy man who sought nothing from this world except happiness in his own tasks.

In spite of its maltreatment this hymn will remain one of the immortals.

“There were ninety and nine that safely lay.”

Writer: Elizabeth Cecilia Clephane.

There were ninety and nine that safely lay

In the shelter of the fold;

But one was out on the hills away,

*Far off from the gates of gold,
Away on the mountains wild and bare,
Away from the tender Shepherd's care.*

*“ Lord, Thou hast here Thy ninety and nine,
Are they not enough for Thee ?*

*But the Shepherd made answer: “ This of Mine
Has wandered away from Me;*

*And altho' the road be rough and steep,
I go to the desert to find My sheep.”*

But none of the ransomed ever knew

*How deep were the waters crossed
Nor how dark was the night that the Lord passed
through*

*Ere He found His sheep that was lost.
Out in the desert He heard its cry,
Sick and helpless, and ready to die.*

*“ Lord, whence are those blood-drops all the way,
That mark out the mountain's track ? ”*

*“ They were shed for one who had gone astray,
Ere the Shepherd could bring him back.”*

“ Lord whence are Thy hands so rent and torn ? ”

“ They are pierced to-night by many a thorn.”

*But all through the mountains, thunder-riven,
And up from the rocky steep,*

There arose a cry to the gate of heaven,

“ Rejoice! I have found My sheep! ”

And the angels echoed around the throne,

“ Rejoice, for the Lord brings back His own! ”

There is quite an interesting story which we feel is well worth repeating, attached to this well-loved, inspiring and emotional hymn. The hymn itself was written by a true daughter of Scotland, Elizabeth Cecilia Clephane, a most popular writer of the last century. The strange part about it is that only by pure accident did the hymn ever gain popularity, and even then only several years after her death.

At one time, she had been asked to write a verse or two as a contribution to a children's magazine popular at that time called "The Children's Hour." She obliged accordingly and included in her effort were the words to this particular hymn. This to all intents and purposes was the only publicity it achieved, but some years after her death, Scotland was favoured with a visit from those two immortal evangelists Moody and Sankey, who at that time were carrying all before them in their great campaign. In those days Scotland was populated chiefly by people who worked on the land, tilling the soil and grazing and rearing cattle and sheep. As their train sped onwards towards the Highlands, it occurred to Mr. Sankey that the bulk of his congregations would probably comprise the simple shepherd folk, and he racked his brain to try and think of something appropriate to sing to them. A fellow-passenger who had alighted at a previous station had discarded on the seat a copy of "The Christian Age," another popular periodical of that time. So, closing his own hymn book Mr. Sankey leaned across and took possession of the paper. Now it so happened that the editor had included in this issue the words written by Elizabeth Clephane which, of course, he had discovered in an old copy of "The Children's Hour." Mr. Sankey was greatly touched and impressed particularly with the verses commencing "There were ninety and nine," and he realised that this was just what he had been looking for.

You will no doubt be amazed that he sang the words as a hymn that evening at a meeting and although he had no music set for it, the tune came to him as he went along. This

was most remarkable and everyone present was greatly taken up with the new hymn. Afterwards his partner Mr. Moody came across and naturally wished to know from where he had obtained it. The simple answer he received was "I got it in answer to prayer."

Elizabeth Cecilia Clephane was born in Edinburgh on June 18th, 1830, the third daughter of Andrew Clephane, Sheriff of Fife. She wrote a great number of hymns, most of which first appeared under the heading of "Breathings on the Border" in a larger hymn book called "The Family Treasury." Included in these hymns was another great favourite, "Beneath the Cross of Jesus I fain would take my stand," a most beautiful hymn and one which certainly touches the soul.

This talented lady was not blessed with a particularly long life, as she died at Bridgend House near Melrose on February 19th, 1869, at the age of thirty-nine. In her short career, however, she accomplished what God had sent her to do. She used her talents to the full, and made a contribution to the Christianity which will last forever.

Manx Fishermen's Hymn.

Writer: W. H. Gill.

*Hear us O Lord from Heaven Thy dwelling place,
Like them of old, in vain we toil all night
Unless with us Thou go who art the light;
Come then, O Lord that we may see Thy face.*

*Thou, Lord dost rule the raging of the sea
When loud the storm and furious is the gale
Strong is Thine arm; our little barquees are frail
Send us Thy help; remember Galilee.*

*Our wives and children we commend to Thee,
For them we plough the land and plough the deep
For them by day the golden corn we reap,
By night the silver harvest of the sea.*

*We thank Thee, Lord for sunshine, dew and rain,
Broadcast from heaven by Thine almighty hand.
Source of all life, unnumbered as the sand
Bird, beast and fish, herb, fruit and golden grain.*

*O Bread of life Thou in Thy word hast said
Who feeds in faith on Me shall never die
In mercy hear Thy hungry children's cry—
Father, give us this day our daily bread.*

*Sow in our hearts the seed of Thy dear love
That we may reap contentment, joy and peace
And when at last our earthly labours cease
Grant us to join Thy harvest home above.*

It is probably true to say that all Sunday Schools and Churches hold special services for harvest-time. This is the period of the year when all the labour and hard work which has gone on throughout the spring and summer at last reaps its reward and gives mankind the food he needs in order to live. Our next hymn therefore is a harvest hymn, and we have chosen it, because although it might not be very well known, in some parts of the world, it is a very beautiful one, and its origin completely different from any other we have so far discussed.

The setting for our discussion is a small island in the Irish Sea, situated between the coasts of Northern England, Scotland and Ireland, once the home of a proud race of people, but now better known as a popular holiday resort. Even today, although coming within the orbit of the United Kingdom, it retains a small Parliament of its own known as the Tynwald.

The inhabitants of the Island, who go by the name of Manxmen, have for centuries toiled for a living on the land or toiled at sea with the fishing nets — the latter a hard dangerous job involving much labour and sometimes very little reward. The fishing industry is actually the background for the hymn which is sometimes referred to as the “Manx Fisherman’s Hymn.” If you will take the trouble to read through the verses we have quoted you will see interwoven in the words how these people worked on the land and at sea, facing constant danger, so that their wives and families might live.

The hymn itself was composed by a Manxman, a Mr. W. H. Gill, who was both a painter and a student of Manx music. He worked as an official in the General Post Office, but his great love for his native songs and melodies was

really his life. He did a great amount of research into this, resulting in his fastening on to a remnant of a very old melody which he converted into a hymn tune and called "Peel Castle," — another Manx name.

Next he required inspiration for words or a suitable subject for this fine tune. After casting around for some considerable time, the inspiration came to him. His subject was the occupation of the fisherfolk of the Island, and an extract from the Manx Book of Common Prayer which reads thus—"That it may please Thee to preserve to our use the kindly fruits of the earth, and to continue and restore unto us the blessings of the sea, so as in due time we may enjoy them."

Perhaps you would refer again to the verses below and the association these have with the short prayer we have quoted above.

Thus, this wonderful hymn was born, with the words based on an extract from the Island's own prayer book, and the tune one of its own native melodies.

One can enjoy such a wonderful holiday in the Isle of Man, that it is very difficult to picture hardship, toil, or danger in the setting of its beautiful mountains, glens and bays. We must remember however that God deemed it thus. Man must, like Nature, struggle to live and to gain reward. It is often quoted that the happiest person is the one who works hard and honestly for his livelihood. He is the contented one. Please remember this whenever you are singing this fine harvest hymn.

“Man of Sorrows, what a name.”

Writer: P. P. Bliss.

*“Man of Sorrows,” what a name
For the Son of God, who came
Ruined sinners to reclaim;
Hallelujah! what a Saviour!*

*Bearing shame and scoffing rude,
In my place condemned He stood;
Sealed my pardon with His blood:
Hallelujah! what a Saviour!*

*Guilty, vile, and helpless, we;
Spotless Lamb of God was He:
“Full atonement!” — can it be?
Hallelujah! what a Saviour!*

*“Lifted up” was He to die,
“It is finished!” was His cry;
Now in heaven exalted high:
Hallelujah! what a Saviour!*

*When He comes, our glorious King,
All His ransomed home to bring,
Then anew this song we’ll sing:
Hallelujah! what a Saviour!*

This hymn—very popular both in America and Britain can often be heard at most open air meetings, where the simplicity of the words, the repetition of the last line of each verse “Hallelujah! what a Saviour,” and the rhythmic nature of the tune to which it is set, make it an ideal hymn for a mixed crowd of onlookers.

There is no particular story attached to the hymn, but the life of the man who wrote it is certainly worth some attention. His name was Philip Bliss, sometimes known as P. P. Bliss, and in addition to the above hymn he wrote numerous others which have had their own particular period of popularity. Included in these are “Whosoever heareth, shout, shout the sound,” “Light in the darkness sailor, day is at hand,” “Only an armour bearer,” “Brightly beams our Father’s mercy,” “At the feet of Jesus” and many more.

Mr. Bliss was born on July 9th, 1838, in Clearfield County, Pennsylvania, the Quaker State. Early in his life he was a staunch Methodist, but some time later, about the year 1871, he moved to Chicago, where he joined the choir of the first Congregational Church to be established in that great city. Three years later in 1874, he felt the growing need for workers for Evangelism, and subsequently found a willing and able partner towards this end in a Mr. D. W. Whittle.

So keen and attached to his mission in life was Philip Bliss, that he donated all the royalties of his hymn writing towards this cause. As this amounted to something like 30,000 dollars—a considerable sum in those days—you will appreciate that Mr. Bliss was left a somewhat poor man—poorer in money value perhaps, but far, far richer in mind and conscience.

His death was very tragic, most unbefitting on the face of it for a man who had devoted all his life towards the

spreading of the Gospel, but one of those acts of God which we must accept and not query. It happened in a great railway disaster at Ashtabula, Ohio, on December 30th, 1876. In this many people lost their lives, but he climbed out unhurt at first from the wreckage. However, typical of the man, he discovered his wife was still trapped inside, and on going back and trying to extricate her, he lost his own life. Perhaps God deemed it this way after all! “Greater love hath no man than this, that he lay down his life for his friend.”

Perhaps it was not a tragic death—let us look on it rather as a noble one.

“How sweet the name of Jesus sounds.”

Writer: John Newton, 1725 - 1807.

*How sweet the Name of Jesus sounds
In a believers' ear;
It soothes his sorrows, heals his wounds,
And drives away his fear.*

*It makes the wounded spirit whole,
And calms the troubled breast;
'Tis manna to the hungry soul,
And to the weary rest.*

*Dear Name, the Rock on which I build,
My Shield and Hiding-place,
My never-failing Treasury, filled
With boundless stores of grace.*

*Jesus, my Shepherd, Saviour, Friend,
My Prophet, Priest, and King,
My Lord, My Life, my Way, my End,
Accept the praise I bring.*

*I would Thy boundless love proclaim
With every fleeting breath;
So shall the music of Thy Name
Refresh my soul in death.*

You have often heard the saying "Can a leopard change its spots" when discussing whether it is ever possible for a wrongdoer to become permanently changed in character. Well, we can aptly utilise it when portraying the life of the writer of this hymn, John Newton, and unhesitatingly answer "yes," for if ever a person passed from one extreme to the other, it was this man. He was born of a godly mother and a less godly but well educated father, and as a boy and youth was completely out of their control. At an early age he boasted of being an atheist—which means that he did not believe in the existence of a God. His father was a sea captain, and of course often away from the home for long periods, but his poor mother—a good Christian did her best for the lad and whilst it seemed then that the seed was falling on stony ground, it is highly probable that some of it took hold on him somewhere and blossomed out later in his life when he was reformed.

What a terrible record he had when young! He mixed with the worst type of companion, was reckless in the extreme and openly admitted committing every known kind of wickedness. Probably he was at his worst when he joined the Navy, for after attempting desertion and behaving generally in a disgusting manner, he was brought back to Plymouth in irons, and publicly whipped. Worse was to follow, for he teamed up with a slave dealer—a common occupation in those days—and eventually became master of a slave ship—an unenviable distinction. For six long years he plied his human cargo on the high seas, but it was at this period that God, moving in His mysterious way, and the early efforts of his good mother slowly broke through the hard core of Newton's wicked ways. He had found a copy of Stanhope's book "Thomas à Kempis" and reading this on some of the long winter evenings his mind started to grasp for things of a spiritual nature. This urge quickly grew almost into a craving, and the crisis came during a terrific storm which hit the ship one day in 1748. It seemed as

though the crew would go down with the ship—nothing could live in those turbulent waters, but prayer followed prayer, and the storm passed away leaving a thankful but completely subdued and humble man—a Christian man, his sins washed away.

The slave ship to him now was nothing but a curse. He asked God for forgiveness for the wicked things he had done, and decided to return to England and start a new life. His first job was as tide surveyor at Liverpool, and it was here that his conversion really became an established fact for he was fortunate enough to meet both Wesley and Whitfield who were busy spreading the Gospel in the big northern cities. He resigned from his post as surveyor and took Holy Orders eventually being ordained as Curate of Olney in Buckinghamshire. After 16 years here he was made Rector of St. Mary Woolnoth in London—his final post.

It was remarkable how Newton's talents for hymn writing developed so late in life. At one period during his work at Olney, he held a weekly prayer meeting and wrote a new hymn for each. Sometimes he was helped by his closest friend of that period, the poet William Cowper. They compiled some beautiful works, two of the best known being "How sweet the name of Jesus sounds," and "Glorious things of Thee are spoken."

You might ask how it was possible for such a transformation to be made and we can only answer that it was one of the miracles of God. They are happening all around us in our everyday life, but we do not have the time and patience to notice them. John Newton preached the Gospel until he was over 80, and nearly blind. His life span lasted from 1725 until 1807. This then was the remarkable life of a human being who through some mysterious power emerged from a life of wickedness and shame into the full daylight of

beauty and glory. An unbeliever who was changed into one of God's greatest disciples.

His own epitaph reads:—

JOHN NEWTON, Clerk.
 Once an infidel and libertine
 A servant of slaves in Africa
 Was by the rich mercy of our Lord and Saviour
 Jesus Christ
 Preserved, restored, pardoned
 And appointed to preach the Faith
 He had long laboured to destroy.
 Near sixteen years at Olney in Bucks.
 And twenty-seven years in this Church.

“ Onward, Christian Soldiers ! ”

Writer: Rev. Sabine Baring-Gould.

*Onward, Christian soldiers!
Marching as to war,
Looking unto Jesus,
Who is gone before.
Christ, the Royal Master,
Leads against the foe;
Forward into battle
See His banners go.*

*Onward, Christian soldiers! marching as to war
Looking unto Jesus, who is gone before.*

*At the name of Jesus
Satan's host doth flee;
On then, Christian soldiers,
On to victory!
Hell's foundations quiver
At the shout of praise:
Brothers, lift your voices,
Loud your anthems raise!*

*Like a mighty army
Moves the church of God:
Brothers, we are treading
Where the saints have trod;
We are not divided,
All one body we—
One in hope and doctrine,
One in charity.*

*Crowns and thrones may perish,
Kingdoms rise and wane;
But the church of Jesus
Constant will remain:
Gates of hell can never
'Gainst that church prevail;
We have Christ's own promise—
And that cannot fail.*

*Onward then, ye people,
Join our happy throng;
Blend with ours your voices
In the triumph song:
Glory, praise, and honour,
Unto Christ the King,
This through countless ages
Men and angels sing.*

We have chosen next, a man who wrote a hymn which many claim is the best known of any in the Christian Church. It is hummed, whistled and sung by the youngest and the oldest, from schoolroom to workshop bench, and it is quite safe to say that to the tune set by a famous English composer of the Victorian era its popularity will never die. The writer of the hymn was the Rev. Sabine Baring-Gould, the name of the hymn "Onward, Christian Soldiers," set to the tune "St. Gertrude" composed by Sir Arthur Sullivan. This minister wrote many other hymns as well, two more popular ones being "Now the day is over," and "Through the night of doubt and sorrow," but probably "Onward, Christian Soldiers" is the one which has brought his name to the forefront. However, we could let a little criticism in here—it is doubtful if the hymn would have been so universally known but for the tune. The words are very good of course, but there is the possibility that in this case the tune really made the hymn, and thus was instrumental in bringing the writer's name into the public eye.

Nevertheless, the Rev. Baring-Gould is worthy of a good name in our records. He was born at Exeter in 1834, educated at Clare College, Cambridge, and held several livings in the Church of England. Eventually he was appointed as squire-rector to a most beautiful village in North Devon named Lew Trenchard, where he remained until his death in 1924 at the wonderful old age of ninety. Besides writing hymns, he also wrote religious books and novels.

“From Greenland’s Icy Mountains.”

Writer: Bishop Reginald Heber.

*From Greenland’s icy mountains,
From India’s coral strand,
Where Afric’s sunny fountains
Roll down their golden sand,—
From many an ancient river,
From many a palmy plain,
They call us to deliver
Their land from error’s chain.*

*What thought the spicy breezes
Blow soft o’er Ceylon’s isle;
Though every prospect pleases,
And only man is vile:
In vain with lavish kindness
The gifts of God are strown;
The heathen, in his blindness,
Bows down to wood and stone.*

*Shall we, whose souls are lighted
With wisdom from on high—
Shall we, to men benighted,
The lamp of life deny?
Salvation! oh, salvation!
The joyful sound proclaim,
Till earth’s remotest nation
Has learned Messiah’s name.*

*Waft, waft, ye winds, His story,
And you, ye waters, roll,
Till, like a sea of glory,
It spreads from pole to pole;
Till o’er our ransomed nature,
The Lamb for sinners slain,
Redeemer, King, Creator,
In bliss returns to reign!*

Here we have one of the world's best known and best loved missionary hymns—one which has spread to every corner of the globe, and been sung by children of all nationalities and colours adopting the Christian religion. The lines are colourful — in fact one can say that there is a small geography lesson in each and it is almost possible to feel the great climatic and physical change of the countries mentioned—“Greenland's icy mountains,” “India's coral strand,” “The spicy breezes blowing soft o'er Ceylon's Isle,” — all these very beautiful and descriptive.

We must not assess the value of the hymn from a geographical standpoint however, but deal with it on its proper basis, which is of course the call to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ to every corner of the earth and by every means possible. “Waft, waft, ye winds, His story, and you ye waters roll, till like a sea of glory, it spreads from Pole to Pole.” These words are from the last verse, but the third verse also quotes, “Till each remotest nation has learned Messiah's name.” Wonderful words, and famous too, but possibly not quite as substantial as those in the second verse “Though every prospect pleases, and only man is vile.” Many sermons and discussions have been given, using this latter phrase as the text.

It is also extremely interesting to learn that the whole hymn was written in about twenty minutes and this includes the writing of the fourth verse which was only added after the author had used up a few minutes in reading the 3 verses already written and deciding that the hymn did not then sound complete. The man responsible for all this was Reginald Heber, born in 1783 at Malpas, in Cheshire, one of England's greenest counties. He was the son of a Fellow of Brasenose College, Oxford, and entered the same college himself where he quickly shone on the literary side, and also made a name for himself writing poetry. Eventually he became Reverend, the Vicar of Hodnet, in Cheshire, and

after a few years there, felt the call for duty in heathen lands overseas. Here he never spared himself in what was then one of the largest dioceses comprising India, Ceylon and Australia. Finally he reached the peak of a distinguished career by being appointed Bishop of Calcutta, but unfortunately the strain of overwork, and the hot unhealthy climate had taken their toll and he died suddenly at Trichinopoly in 1826. As he had also travelled in Germany and Russia, it was no wonder he wrote such a wonderful missionary hymn. A final tribute to his wonderful work was his ordaining of a native as a minister of the Christian Church—the first ever to attain this position.

This then was the man who composed such a beautiful hymn in such a short time. It was in the year 1819, on the Saturday preceding Whit-Sunday that the then Rev. Reginald Heber was staying at Wrexham, N. Wales, with his father-in-law, Dr. Shipley, Dean of St. Asaph. The latter was in rather a quandary. He was very keen on the spreading of the Gospel overseas, and he had prepared a rousing sermon on just this subject, but unfortunately there seemed to be no hymn sufficiently inspiring to go with it. Reginald Heber had already by this time shown great talent in writing verse—one can say almost “on the spot,” so the Dean turned to him for some assistance. You have already heard the result, and how this hymn has since made its influence felt over the whole world.

In all, Dr. Heber wrote some 57 hymns, which included such famous ones as “Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty,” and “The Son of God goes forth to War.” Several tunes have been written for “From Greenland’s icy mountains,” but it is characteristic of the man that Bishop Heber also composed a tune for it, which he named appropriately “Calcutta,” the city where he was made Bishop.

“Jesus loves me—this I know.”

Writer: Anna Warner.

*Jesus loves me! this I know,
For the Bible tells me so;
Little ones to Him belong;
They are weak, but He is strong.*

*Yes, Jesus loves me! Yes, Jesus loves me!
Yes, Jesus loves me! The Bible tells me so!*

*Jesus loves me! He who died
Heaven's gate to open wide:
He will wash away my sin,
Let His little child come in.*

*Jesus loves me! He will stay
Close beside me all the way:
If I love Him, when I die
He will take me home on high.*

This simple but immortal hymn stirs up within us memories of our childhood, because it is essentially a children's hymn, and usually taught before the child can either read or write. It is a great favourite and somehow it's very simplicity and the constant repetition of the words "Jesus loves me" certainly bring home to the child a feeling that through all the ups and downs of its life, the presence of God will always be there, provided the child has faith in Jesus.

The authoress was an American lady named Anna Warner, born in 1822. Her sister, Susan, was the authoress of famous books for children "Queechy and The Wide, Wide, World," among others.

Anna was a very religious lady and had a great gift for assimilating foreign languages. This gift she put to very good use, for she devoted much of her time to the translation of hymns from other languages. Examples of these are "Source of all good to which I aspire," from the Latin, and "Another day is ended," which she took from the German.

Although nothing much more is known about her, we as Christians must be greatly indebted to her for her contribution to our collection of hymns.

“Safe in the arms of Jesus.”

Writer: Francis Jane Crosby.

*Safe in the arms of Jesus,
Safe on His gentle breast,
There, by His love o'ershaded,
Sweetly my soul shall rest.
Hark! 'tis the voice of angels
Borne in a song to me,
Over the fields of glory,
Over the jasper sea.*

*Safe in the arms of Jesus,
Safe on His gentle breast!
There by His love o'ershaded,
Sweetly my soul shall rest.*

*Safe in the arms of Jesus,
Safe from corroding care,
Safe from the world's temptations,
Sin cannot harm me there.
Free from the blight of sorrow,
Free from my doubts and fears;
Only a few more trials,
Only a few more tears!*

*Jesus, my heart's dear refuge,
Jesus has died for me;
Firm on the Rock of Ages
Ever my trust shall be.
Here let me wait with patience,
Wait till the night is o'er;
Wait till I see the morning
Break on the golden shore.*

“Fanny” Crosby’s great triumph over physical disability was so remarkable, we feel she is entitled to a small chapter all her own. The handicap of blindness is a dreadful one, but Nature has a wonderful way of compensating people so stricken, and usually brings out in them qualities which otherwise might have lain dormant in them for ever. So it was with this talented lady. Shortly after her birth in America in 1823, even before the tiny baby was really aware of the wonder and beauty of this world her eyesight was taken away from her—it is reported—by the application of an over-heated poultice to her eyes. From this tender age she faced life’s stony pathway completely devoid of one of Nature’s greatest gifts to the human race.

As the child grew in stature and her other faculties developed, it was noticeable that her hearing was particularly good. She enjoyed long walks in the countryside; and the singing of the birds and sound of the rushing wind and water seemed to have a very buoyant effect on her spirits, so much so that she is credited with the composition of the following verse when she was only 8 years of age:—

Oh, what a happy soul am I!
 Although I cannot see
 I am resolved that in this world
 Contented I will be.

Very simple lines you might say, but there is a fine spirit of acceptance about them which was remarkable for one so young in years. She retained this simple style of writing throughout her long life — nothing deep or of any great literary value about it—but really gentle and sweet, with a pronounced emotional touch which positively endeared human hearts to her.

For the betterment of her education, she entered the New York City Institution for the Blind at the age of 11, and remained there for 23 years during which time she became a teacher at the school.

It was in 1858 that she married the Rev. Alexander Van Alstyne—a great musician who, like herself had also overcome the disability of blindness. This was a very happy marriage—two people both with the same physical handicap—one with a gift for music, and the other for writing. As was only to be expected, the husband composed music for several of his wife's poems. They both worked exceedingly hard, and Fanny herself is said to have composed over 2,000 hymns (some sources claim 7,000) many of them specially for children such as "I am Jesu's little Friend" and "Little beam of rosy light." She teamed up with the famous evangelist Ira D. Sankey, and many of her hymns appeared in the latter's collection. As a result of this she quickly became famous herself throughout England and America. Possibly the most endearing and famous of her hymns is "Safe in the arms of Jesus." It is one which has been sung throughout the world in all sorts of circumstances—at open air meetings, by lonely travellers and people in great danger and pain, and yet it came about in a very simple way.

One of her best friends was a well-known American song composer, a Mr. W. H. Doane, who asked her one day if she would try and compose a few verses for a favourite tune of his, and having as the theme the words "Safe in the arms of Jesus." As he played the tune, the words seemed to come to her from some unseen power, and the result was the wonderful hymn we have just mentioned.

The same combination of people was also responsible for another famous hymn "Rescue the perishing, care for the dying" a great favourite with soldiers and sailors, many of whom have been converted after hearing it sung at meetings.

Yes, she was indeed a great personality—kind, gentle,

humble, endowed with great gifts of stamina for the work she pursued, and above all a shining example of how courage and devotion to duty can overcome even the greatest of physical handicaps. She must have been a very happy woman right up to the time of her death in 1915 at the ripe old age of 92.

“O Worship the King.”

Writer: Sir Robert Grant.

*Oh, worship the King,
All glorious above!
Oh, gratefully sing
His power and His love;
Our Shield and Defender,
The Ancient of Days,
Pavilioned in splendour,
And girded with praise.*

*Oh, tell of His might,
Oh, sing of His grace!
Whose robe is the light,
Whose canopy space;
His chariots of wrath
The deep thunderclouds form,
And dark is His path
On the wings of the storm.*

*The earth with its store
Of wonders untold,
Almighty! Thy power
Hath founded of old:
Hath 'stablished it fast
By a changeless decree,
And round it hath cast,
Like a mantle, the sea.*

*Thy bountiful care,
What tongue can recite!
It breathes in the air,
It shines in the light:
It streams from the hills,
It descends to the plain,
And sweetly distils
In the dew and the rain.*

*Frail children of dust,
 And feeble as frail:
 In Thee do we trust
 Nor find Thee to fail;
 Thy mercies how tender,
 How firm to the end!
 Our Maker, Defender,
 Redeemer, and Friend!*

*O measureless Might!
 Ineffable Love!
 While angels delight
 To hymn Thee above,
 The humbler creation,
 Though feeble their lays,
 With true adoration
 Shall sing to Thy praise.*

This well-known hymn of praise was the work of a man who reached the top in civil and administrative affairs, yet never let such success damp his spiritual beliefs. He spent his life in trying to do good amongst his people, and he set a perfect example by virtue of his sterling character and forthrightness.

The man's name, Sir Robert Grant, is not very well known perhaps, but he was one of the many thousands of people who throughout history have carried on with their good work in a quiet, but effective way, never sparing themselves, and leaving a little something behind in the form of a hymn or a verse so that their names are not entirely forgotten.

He was born in 1785, received a good education at Cambridge, where he graduated in 1806. A year later he became a barrister of law and in 1826 Member of Parliament for Inverness in Scotland. After a period as Privy Councillor,

he was sent overseas to India where he was promoted to Governor of Bombay in 1834. The latter situation suited his personality and talents, and he soon became a very popular figure amongst the people of that city.

Unfortunately his end was near, and he died on July 9th, 1838, at Dapoonè, Western India.

His death was much mourned by the local populace, and after a public meeting at Bombay, it was unanimously decided to build a medical school bearing his name; this was something by which his good work would always be remembered. He had striven to help the poor uneducated natives and as far as the peoples of the East were concerned, medicine was still only in its infancy, but really a dire necessity.

In what little spare time he had, and during his quiet devotional periods, he wrote several hymns, the best known one being of course "O Worship the King." Others perhaps lesser known now were "Saviour when in dust to Thee," and "When gathering clouds around I view." Let us always associate this former hymn therefore with the memory of a perfect gentleman and a Christian.

“As with gladness men of old.”

Writer : William Chatterton Dix.

*As with gladness men of old
Did the guiding star behold,
As with joy they hailed its light,
Leading onward, beaming bright;
So, most gracious Lord, may we
Evermore be led to Thee.*

*As with joyful steps they sped,
Saviour, to Thy lowly bed,
There to bend the knee before
Thee Whom Heav'n and earth adore;
So may we with willing feet
Ever seek Thy mercy-seat.*

*As they offer'd gifts most rare
At Thy cradle rude and bare;
So may we with holy joy,
Pure and free from sin's alloy,
All our costliest treasures bring,
Christ, to Thee our heavenly King.*

*Holy Jesus, every day
Keep us in the narrow way,
And, when earthly things are past,
Bring our ransom'd souls at last
Where they need no star to guide,
Where no clouds Thy glory hide.*

*In the Heav'nly country bright
Need they no created light;
Thou its Light, its Joy, its Crown,
Thou its Sun which goes not down;
There for ever may we sing
Alleluias to our King.*

Christmas, of course, has always been a source of inspiration for hymn and carol writers, and the work of these people has given us a festival of music and verse at this time of the Christian year which is unequalled in general popularity.

The above hymn is naturally included in this category. We are really quite correct in calling it a Christmas Hymn, although in actual fact it was composed for what we term the "Epiphany." This rather awkward sounding word is used to describe a church festival celebrated on January 6th in commemoration of the appearance of Christ to the Wise Men of the East. It is generally agreed that the period of Christmas extends 12 days, so that Epiphany is included in it.

The writer of the hymn was named William Chatterton Dix, and he, like many others we have mentioned, wrote a large number of hymns, which although very popular at the time have since faded into insignificance. There are now only three of his left which are in common use—"As with gladness, men of old," "Come unto me ye weary," and "To thee, O Lord, our hearts we raise." We are also forcibly reminded of the fact that bodily pain whilst very unwelcome at all times, can have a stimulating effect on hidden talent as William Dix always seemed to write his best hymns when suffering in such manner. It was in similar circumstances that he composed "As with gladness men of old." If you examine this hymn carefully, you will see that it tells the story of the Three Wise Men being guided by the Star, and at the conclusion of the verses the moral is set out for we human beings to follow in our turn;

"So most gracious Lord may we
Evermore be led to thee."

He had been seriously ill at the time: and whilst pondering over one or two religious thoughts in his mind he had the sudden inspiration to set down this immortal story. The tune

we normally associate with it is called "Dix," but actually it is taken from a German chorale composed by Conrad Kocher. Some people say that the writer of the words hated the tune called after him, but he admitted eventually that the two were really inseparable. If it is of interest, the words were written in 1860, and the tune (in the German version) in 1838.

Dix was born in Bristol in 1837, the son of a surgeon. His life with the exception of the hymn writing was largely uneventful, but he was revered by everyone as a true Christian gentleman. He had a grammar school education, and early on in life trained for a job at sea. However, he eventually became an official in a marine insurance office where he worked for many years.

Later he suffered much ill-health, but whilst this was most unfortunate in many ways it did at least bring its own reward by carving his name in the book of immortals. Of course he might easily have written many verses and hymns even if his health had stayed good until the end, but probably the main inspiration would have been lacking, and therefore his writings been just ordinary.

He died peacefully in 1898, a very well-loved man.

“Jesu, Lover of my Soul.”

Writer: Charles Wesley, 1707-1788.

*Jesus, Lover of my soul,
 Let me to Thy bosom fly,
 While the nearer waters roll,
 While the tempest still is high;
 Hide me, O my Saviour, hide,
 Till the storm of life is past;
 Safe into the haven guide,
 Oh, receive my soul at last!*

*Other refuge have I none,
 Hangs my helpless soul on Thee;
 Leave, oh, leave me not alone,
 Still support and comfort me:
 All my trust on Thee is stayed,
 All my help from Thee I bring;
 Cover my defenceless head
 With the shadow of Thy wing.*

*Thou, O Christ, art all I want;
 More than all in Thee I find:
 Raise the fallen, cheer the faint,
 Heal the sick, and lead the blind:
 Just and holy is Thy name,
 I am all unrighteousness;
 Vile, and full of sin I am,
 Thou art full of truth and grace.*

*Plenteous grace with Thee is found—
 Grace to cover all my sin:
 Let the healing streams abound;
 Make me, keep me pure within:
 Thou of life the Fountain art,
 Freely let me take of Thee:
 Spring Thou up within my heart,
 Rise to all eternity.*

No book on hymns could possibly be complete without mention of the most prolific hymn writer who ever lived—a man who altogether wrote over 6,500 of them, published in more than 50 separate volumes. The man's name? None other than Charles Wesley, one of a famous pair of brothers who were responsible for the foundation of the Methodist Church. Charles was gifted, no doubt about that, and it is almost impossible to talk about hymns without bringing up in the conversation, at least one written by him.

Hymns for all occasions simply flowed from his pen “Hark the Herald Angels Sing,” “Christ the Lord is Risen Today,” “O for a Thousand Tongues to Sing,” all were the product of his fertile mind, and whilst it is impossible to vouch for the most popular, it is the opinion of a vast number in the Church that “Jesu lover of my Soul” is probably Wesley at his brilliant best. This world famous hymn has a special appeal all of its own. One great American writer, Henry Ward Beecher once stated that he would prefer being the writer of that hymn to having the fame of all the kings on earth. There is more glory and power in it.

Many are the stories which have been written as to the origin of the hymn, the following possibly being the most likely one to stimulate such wonderful thoughts.

It is said that the ship on which Wesley was once a passenger encountered a fierce storm. A storm at sea is always a frightening affair reaching deep into the hearts of men, and often bringing out prayers which have come direct from the soul. This was exactly the effect it had on Wesley, and the situation was made more colourful when a seabird, exhausted through its battle against the elements sought shelter on the ship, and landed in Wesley's lap where it lay tired and bedraggled. The very wildness and beauty of the moment is said to have inspired Wesley to form in his mind,

the words of the great hymn. The poor bird buffeted by the storms of the outer world sought refuge and peace in the bosom of the man.

“Jesu, lover of my soul, let me to thy bosom fly.” It is quite easy to see the connection.

The impact that the two brothers Charles and John made upon the English speaking world was terrific. Although we are chiefly concerned with Charles the hymn-writer, his life was so linked up with his preacher brother, John, that the latter must come into our little story from time to time.

Charles Wesley was born in 1707, four years after his brother, and it seems almost as though God destined that they should come into the world at a time when there was such a great need for a religious revival and general turning by the population towards higher things in life.

At this period conditions in England were really wretched. Somehow the people seemed to have allowed their baser qualities to come to the surface—mercy and tolerance were lacking to such an extent that young children were hanged, sometimes in public for very petty offences. Cruel sports such as bull-baiting and cock fighting were indulged in, and on the roads, due to the fact that no police force existed, highwaymen and robbers abounded. In other words this was a perfect example of how a great nation, without any religion to live for, quickly becomes corrupt. England was supposed to be Christian, but unfortunately something had gone wrong—many of the people had become careless in their beliefs, and there was no real leadership until the advent of these two truly great men. They brought revival to the Church of Christ, and because of them hospitals and new churches were created, missions to heathen lands founded and steps to banish the slave trade were made.

The father of Charles was a rector of the Church of England in the tiny village of Epworth, Lincolnshire, and the

family contained nineteen children, of whom 10 survived childhood and grew into men and women. It was fortunate that he had a wonderful mother—because she gave him the basis of a good education. In those days it must be remembered that only a very few people in the country could read or write. Early in life, he and his brother John were sent to Oxford for further education, and it was here that, along with a few more serious and religious minded men they banded themselves together, determined to set an example to others by the purity of life they lived. As a result of this they were nicknamed “The Holy Club” or “Methodists.” People laughed at them, but nothing daunted, they carried on with their good work, visiting the sick and the needy, and spreading the gospel wherever they went. It is surprising what courage and faith can do—whatever the cause, they carry a torch to light the way to success.

At one period of his life Charles, with John, decided to visit the new colony of Georgia in North America, as missionaries to the poor uneducated Indians who lived there. In those days it wasn't such an easy passage between Britain and America. Air travel was unknown, and the ships, whilst sturdily built of English oak, were completely lacking in what we regard as the essentials for comfort. Naturally when any bad weather was experienced, one can imagine the chaos which would be created in the overcrowded passengers' quarters. So it was on this particular voyage. The ship was hit by a great storm. She rolled and pitched while the wind shrieked through the rigging and huge waves poured over the decks threatening to engulf her. Many of the English passengers were overcome with fear, clinging to one another, and shouting prayers to God. It was indeed a terrible scene, needing courage and faith in order to keep calm. On board at the same time, was a band of religious people from Central Europe, who were called Moravian Christians. Their stoicism was remarkable. They were calm and dignified and during the worst moments of the storm, went about

among the distressed passengers comforting them, and giving great help where necessary. The Wesleys were tremendously impressed with them and eventually on their return to England they became associated a great deal with this particular sect of Christians who had proved their faith by sterling example.

Charles married in 1749 and settled in Bristol, thus breaking his association with his brother in the great work which had carried them all over Britain and even abroad. Later in life he moved to Marylebone, London, where he died on March 29th, 1788, at 81 years of age. The strange thing was (and we have purposely left this to the last) that although Wesley had given most of his life to the work of Methodism, and also actively supported the Moravian Church yet before he died he stated "I have lived and I die in the communion of the Church of England and I will be buried in the churchyard of my parish church." He was thus interred in Marylebone Parish Churchyard, and remained a member of the Church of England to the end.

“Master, the Tempest is raging.”

Writer: Miss Mary A. Baker.

*Master, the tempest is raging!
 The billows are tossing high!
 The sky is o'ershadowed with blackness
 No shelter or help is nigh:
 “Carest Thou not that we perish?”—
 How canst Thou lie asleep,
 When each moment so madly is threat'ning
 A grave in the angry deep?*

*“The winds and the waves shall obey My
 will,
 Peace, . . . be still!
 Whether the wrath of the storm-tossed sea,
 Or demonds, or men, or whatever it be,
 No water can swallow the ship where lies
 The Master of ocean, and earth, and skies:
 They all shall sweetly obey My will; Peace,
 Peace, be still!”*

*Master, with anguish of spirit
 I bow in my grief to-day;
 The depths of my sad heart are troubled;
 Oh, waken and save, I pray!
 Torrents of sin and of anguish
 Sweep o'er my sinking soul;
 And I perish! dear Master:
 Oh, hasten, and take control.*

*Master, the terror is over,
 The elements sweetly rest;
 Earth's sun in the calm lake is mirrored,
 And heaven's within my breast;
 Linger, O blessèd Redeemer,
 Leave me alone no more;
 And with joy I shall make the blest harbour,
 And rest on the blissful shore.*

We have to thank the combination of effort of two people for this very popular hymn — the actual composer Miss Mary A. Baker, and the driving force behind the scenes — a Dr. H. R. Palmer. The latter was largely instrumental in persuading Miss Baker to rally round the Christian cause again at a time when a certain tragic event threatened to turn her completely away from her faith.

Miss Baker was a mid-West American, born at Chicago, Illinois, and brought up from childhood as a Baptist. In her youth she was a great temperance worker, openly and fervently expressing her views on the evils of strong drink, and eventually composing a number of hymns on the subject.

About this time, her brother, to whom she was closely attached, was stricken by serious illness, and was advised by his doctors to take a few months holiday in the Southern States where it was hoped the gentler, warmer climate would restore him to health and vigour. Unfortunately their prediction proved to be wrong. Her brother's condition rapidly deteriorated, and after a few days of agony and pain he passed away.

Miss Baker was temporarily stunned by the severe shock of it all. Her reaction was a complete surprise to all her associates, although perhaps understandable at the time. She turned away from the beliefs and faith of her youth. Her whole attitude was cynical and rebellious towards the God she had previously worshipped and adored. It was hard for her to associate God's love and care with the painful death of her brother, and it seemed at this stage that Christianity would lose one of its staunchest supporters. However, this was not to be as we shall soon see.

A certain Dr. H. R. Palmer—composer of many of Sanky & Moody's hymn tunes and writer of the famous hymn "Yield not to temptation" was engaged at this time in writing hymns for a series of Sunday School lessons. One

of the themes involved was Christ stilling the storm, and he asked Miss Baker to contribute something towards his work. This theme suited her mood at the time and she embodied in the beautiful hymn "Master the tempest is raging," both the theme of the lesson and her own sad and bitter experiences.

The hymn was an immediate success and after Dr. Palmer had composed the music became a great favourite all over the Christian world. Altogether a great triumph for the forces of good.

“Jesus shall reign.”

Writer: Dr. Isaac Watts.

*Jesus shall reign where'er the sun
Doth his successive journeys run;
His kingdom stretch from shore to shore,
Till moons shall wax and wane no more.*

*Peoples and realms of every tongue
Dwell on His love with sweetest song;
And infant voices shall proclaim
Their early blessings on his Name.*

*To Him shall endless prayer be made,
And endless praises crown His head;
His name like sweet perfume shall rise
With every morning sacrifice.*

*Then all the earth shall rise and bring
Peculiar honours to its King;
Angels descend with songs again,
And earth repeat the loud Amen.*

Most children love the spirit of adventure, and you can be certain that there is no lack of this in Christianity, otherwise how would you account for the fact that so many men and women have taken it upon themselves to leave home and comfort, and sail over the seas to far away heathen lands, spreading to savage people the story of Jesus Christ, and how he came into the world to save mankind? These people were for the most part kind and gentle—(nothing like you imagine would be required to travel among fierce tribes, perhaps even cannibals), and they faced the most terrible dangers without even a weapon with which to defend themselves. Perhaps it is wrong to say they were unarmed—they were actually armed to the teeth but with the weapons of love and kindness and they tried to tell the natives that war was wrong and that following Christ instead would make them happier. These men and women were called missionaries, and they penetrated the most distant parts of the earth taking the Christian religion with them — yes, and their hymns, too. Could anything be braver than this—to face death for your faith; and some people still think that Christianity and adventure do not mix!

This is the setting you must keep in your minds when we discuss the next hymn written by the famous writer Dr. Isaac Watts (1674-1748):

“ Jesus shall reign where’er the sun
Doth its successive journeys run,
His Kingdom stretch from shore to shore—
Till suns shall rise and set no more.”

The scene of our story is that area of the globe known as the South Sea Islands— islands of romance and adventure which are dotted all over the Pacific Ocean, and about which many exciting stories have been written. One can understand why, when it is considered that a little over a century ago many of the happy brown-skinned natives which popu-

late the islands today were fierce cannibals—savage heathens who worshipped idols, and whose religion was based on fear and cruelty.

See SOUTH PACIFIC
This was an ideal working ground for the bold Christian missionaries in the early 1800's, and once a small foothold had been gained the new faith spread rapidly amongst these primitive peoples. They couldn't read or write of course, and great patience was required to teach them civilised ways.

In our present narrative we are concerned chiefly with two groups of islands—the Tonga or Friendly Islands and Fiji which you will see from the map are about 250 miles apart.

In the year 1821, the Fijians had largely accepted Christianity as their new religion, but as yet the Tongans were still heathen and to a large extent cannibal. Imagine the fear and terror therefore which struck the population of Fiji when one fine sunny morning a large Tongan war canoe was sighted heading straight for their Island. They naturally feared the worst. They had destroyed most of their war weapons as the new religion had taught them. It was a tense moment—but a surge of relief swept through the crowd on the beach when it was seen that the occupants of the canoe were not wearing their usual war paint. The transformation was complete as soon as the natives touched land and made known the reason for their visit. They had come not to kill, but of all things to buy a Bible!

It appears that the Tongans had heard from somewhere about the white man's religion (news always travels fast among the islands of the Pacific) and as it promised so much they were anxious to know something about it. Previously they had sent a similar canoe for the same reason, but this must have hit a reef or been capsized in a storm because nothing was heard of it again. What the occupants of this second successful expedition never realised was, of course,

that none of them could read, so the white man's Bible would not be much use to them. Here fortune took a hand. A missionary who was already on the island of Fiji said he would go back to Tonga with the party, and interpret the Book to them in a way that they would understand. It was a very brave thing to do in view of the reputation of the Tongans but so successful was this man, that Christianity became firmly established in Tonga and the neighbouring islands during the next few years.

We can perhaps point to Whit Sunday of the year 1862 as representing the peak point of success of the work done by the faithful missionaries.

On this day thousands of natives from Tonga and the neighbouring islands gathered there at a huge assembly presided over by the once cannibal monarch King George himself, now an earnest follower of Christ, and there before all his followers and the other peoples from the islands he declared all his kingdom and his Government to be Christian.

This was the first occasion in history that all these natives had met together for divine worship.

What a scene! All those brown, happy faces, radiant with the joy of finding something new to live for gathered together as one — battle scarred warriors, old chiefs, and young men. They had come out of the terrors and darkness of heathen worship into the full glory of admitting Christ into their lives.

Now comes the climax of our little story. The whole vast congregation burst into song — and can you guess what that song was? None other than the hymn we mentioned at the beginning "Jesus shall reign where'er the sun." Just try to imagine what a victory this was for Christianity. There would be a vivid blue sky, blue sea, white coral beach, palm

trees and brilliant hued flowers and birds and rising from this setting this famous missionary hymn sung in the native language.

This hymn was written of course not in a momentary flash of genius, but as the result of Dr. Watts great talent for composing hymns. We have given you this story to associate with it, so that you will always picture in your minds the teaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ to our coloured brothers overseas. It has been set to several tunes, but the two main ones are called "Truro" and "Warrington." Both are rousing ones, and the singing of either creates a feeling of exultation and joy. Yes, this is certainly a hymn you must store up in your mind for the future—you will never tire of it.

Now for the man himself. He was born at Southampton on July 16, 1674, the son of a schoolmaster. In those days it was looked upon as a major sin if people did not look to the established or recognised Church of the country but instead worshipped in their own style proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ. These people were called Nonconformists, and young Isaac's father had already suffered a spell in prison for supporting these people before the lad was born. This was a period when holding fast to one's own beliefs meant having courage.

The boy was outstanding in his religious fervour at a very early age. He was unique in that he was gifted with the talent of turning out rhyme and verse on the spot on almost any subject. Quite naturally his parents encouraged the scholastic and unusually deep thoughts he carried, and after some remarkable achievements he eventually became a preacher in 1699, carrying on in this capacity until 1736, during which year he retired, only to die a few years later in 1748 at the age of 74. He was buried in Bunhill Fields, London.

His bust, or if you prefer, a sculpture of his head, face and shoulders can be seen in Westminster Abbey.

As is often the case with brilliant minded people—they are sometimes quite unattractive as far as physical appearance is concerned. Dr. Watts was no exception, being only about five feet in height but he carried with him a heart of gold, giving away to charity about one third of his earnings. Not many people would do that today.

He was exceptionally fond of children although strangely enough he never married. His was the courage of a lion, because throughout his life he suffered terrible ill-health. To the end of his days he always had four articles near by him—his Bible, his books, his telescope and lute.

It would be hard to close without drawing your attention to what was really his one great aim in all his religious preaching through sermons and hymns. This was to help the worshipper to draw near to God. That is why, young people, you ought to regard Dr. Isaac Watts as one of your heroes—in the knowledge that he gave his all for the benefit of old and young that they might live the only happy life—which is—the truly religious one.

“Now thank we all our God.”

Writer: Martin Rinkart.

*Now thank we all our God,
With heart, and hands, and voices,
Who wondrous things hath done,
In Whom His world rejoices;
Who from our mother's arms
Hath bless'd us on our way
With countless gifts of love,
And still is ours to-day.*

*O may this bounteous God
Through all our life be near us,
With ever joyful hearts
And blessèd peace to cheer us;
And keep us in His grace,
And guide us when perplexed,
And free us from all ills
In this world and the next.*

*All praise and thanks to God
The Father now be given,
The Son, and Him Who reigns
With Them in highest Heaven,
The One Eternal God,
Whom earth and Heav'n adore,
For thus it was, is now,
And shall be evermore.*

It is perhaps advisable to remind you at this stage that quite a considerable number of our great hymns come from abroad, particularly from Germany and Austria. Any student of music will tell you of the different styles which obtain on the continent of Europe, and although many of the countries are joined together geographically, they have retained their own customs and styles of writing and composing music throughout the ages. The French and Italian races, i.e., the Latin people, are a light-hearted excitable type, and their temperament is fully brought out in the bright and happy songs they sing. The Germans, described as a Teutonic race are of a different temperament. They are noted for their stolid, ponderous ways and whilst similar to the British in character perhaps they could be described as a little "heavier" — that is to say a little less light hearted. This fact is easily recognisable in their music. They excel in the majestic, powerful, choral type, and if any of you have ever heard any pieces composed by Bach and Wagner you will know right away what kind of music we have in mind.

One of the best known writers of German hymns was Martin Luther, whose "Away in a Manger" is a household name amongst most children. However, at the moment we are not concerned with Luther, but with another fellow German by the name of Martin Rinkart who lived from 1586 to 1649. He wrote the hymn we now have in mind, and which is typically German—slow, heavy and majestic.

"Now thank we all our God,

With hearts and hands and voices," etc.

We go back in history now to the Thirty Years War (1620-1648) during which one of the storm centres was the little town of Eilenburg in Saxony—a province of Germany from whence some of our early forefathers, the Saxons originated. There were many fierce battles in this area,

during which the Austrians sacked the town once, and the Swedes twice, so that conditions must have been very difficult indeed for the population who in those days did not have the facilities of easy transport and good sanitary arrangements as we know them today.

You can well imagine how refugees from the surrounding countryside would flee in terror when conflicts took place near their homes, and naturally the only place for them to seek refuge would be in the town itself where they would hope to find protection, food and shelter. Unfortunately hostilities were so long drawn out, that the little town became hopelessly overcrowded, and eventually terrible plagues struck the population, bringing death to thousands. Only one minister survived through this period in Eilenburg, the man named Martin Rinkart. You can grasp some idea of the situation when it is reported that he often took upwards of 50 funerals in a single day!

Towards the end of the war, out of a total of about 1,000 houses which comprised the town, almost 800 were destroyed, whilst the final blow came in the form of acute famine which made an already disastrous situation just about hopeless.

However, as in all things, the end did come, and the Peace of Westphalia was signed bringing intense relief to a battle-scarred country.

In spite of all the privations they had suffered the people generally were still of a religious turn of mind. When the last shot had been fired they were eager to come together and offer thanks to God for the hard won peace that had come to them. It speaks volumes for their staunch faith in their religious beliefs that although they had suffered war, famine and plague, whilst so many of them had lost nearly

all they possessed, including loved ones and homes, yet they were prepared to carry on with their worship. This is the sort of thing we call real courage.

So great was the clamour for some form of recognition of peace, that the Elector of Saxony announced that a general Thanksgiving Service would be held in every church throughout the country. He also chose a suitable text from which each minister should build his sermon.

Just study this quotation for a minute or two and you will see how suitable it was for the occasion. This was the thought that also struck Martin Rinkart as he thought and pondered, his shrewd mind slowly moulded the words of the text into the form of a hymn which he would of course use at his own Thanksgiving Service. Just turn for a moment to the first verse of "Now thank we all our God" which we have given earlier in this story, and you will see for yourselves how this was done. The hymn, by the way, is sung in Churches and Sunday Schools all over the Christian world—in other words it is universally known, and when you are singing it yourselves, try to recapture some of the glorious feeling which must have accompanied the hymn in those days long ago when its notes of gladness told the long-suffering people that war was over, and peace was with them. We couldn't close our little story of course without reminding ourselves that the music for the hymn was composed by another German named J. Gröger and he called it "Nun Danket." Perhaps we should also give some thanks to the lady who translated the hymn from German into English for us. Her name was Miss C. Winkworth.

“There is a green hill far away.”

Writer: Mrs. Cecil Frances Alexander.

*There is a green hill far away,
Without a city wall,
Where the dear Lord was crucified,
Who died to save us all.*

*We may not know, we cannot tell,
What pains He had to bear;
But we believe it was for us
He hung and suffered there.*

*He died that we might be forgiven,
He died to make us good,
That we might go at last to heaven,
Saved by His precious blood.*

*There was no other good enough
To pay the price of sin;
He only could unlock the gate
Of heaven, and let us in.*

*Oh, dearly, dearly has He loved!
And we must love Him too:
And trust in His redeeming blood,
And try His works to do.*

This was just one of the many hundreds of hymns written by that most prolific and talented of writers, Mrs. Cecil Frances Alexander. She specialised particularly in hymns for young people, and in addition to the one above, we still have with us today such favourites as "All things bright and beautiful," "Once in Royal David's City," and "We are but little children weak."

It is a known fact that her little godsons were instrumental in making her realise how difficult it was for young people to understand the Creed, and so she hit upon the idea of illustrating each principal fact by means of a hymn. "There is a green hill far away" is a good illustration of this, for it represents the part "Suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried." However, we shall refer again to this hymn a little later on. Another well known one "All things bright and beautiful," has a definite link with "I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and Earth," whilst the Christmas favourite "Once in Royal David's City" was based on "And in Jesus Christ, His only Son our Lord, Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost," etc. She carried this idea out in several other hymns which were all built up round passages from the Bible.

Cecil Frances Humphreys as she was named before her marriage, was the daughter of a soldier. Born in 1823, she very quickly showed great talent in writing poetry and verse, and at the age of 20 years she wrote the wonderful hymn we all associate with Easter "There is a Green Hill far away, without a city wall." At this juncture it is perhaps advisable to stress the fact that the words "without a city wall" are often misinterpreted by young people as "a hill not having a city wall," which of course, is rather nonsensical. The true meaning of the word "without" in this case is "outside." It is supposed to be an established fact that the green hill in question was located on the outskirts of the town of Londonderry in Northern Ireland and Miss Humphreys often drove past it on her way to the City. She always said it

reminded her of Calvary, and no doubt this touch of imagination gave her the necessary stimulus to write the hymn.

Three years later, when 23, she married the Rev. William Alexander,]who afterwards became Archbishop of Armagh, Northern Ireland.

It was automatically a very happy marriage, both parties were devoted to each other, and their tastes in life common.

It is often quoted that one can judge a person's character by the things he or she writes, and this was certainly true in the case of Mrs. Alexander. She was a most humble soul, generous and kind and a great amount of the money she gained from the publications of her works were passed over to charity.

Her death in 1895 at the age of 72 was much mourned by the local population and indeed by most Christian people everywhere.

Surely you must agree that our collection of hymns and the pleasure they give us would be far less had it not been for the genius of this fine woman.

“My faith looks up to Thee.”

Writer: Ray Palmer.

*My faith looks up to Thee,
Thou Lamb of Calvary,
Saviour Divine;
Now hear me while I pray:
Take all my guilt away;
Oh, let me from this day
Be wholly Thine.*

*May Thy rich grace impart
Strength to my fainting heart,
My zeal inspire:
As Thou hast died for me,
Oh, may my love to Thee
Pure, warm, and changeless be—
A living fire.*

*While life's dark maze I tread,
And griefs around me spread,
Be Thou my Guide:
Bid darkness turn to day,
Wipe sorrow's tears away;
Nor let me ever stray
From Thee aside.*

*When ends life's transient dream—
When death's cold, sullen stream
Shall o'er me roll—
Blest Saviour, then in love,
Fear and distrust remove;
Oh, bear me safe above—
A ransomed soul.*

This was the first hymn ever written by Ray Palmer and strange to say the most widely known of all, although he was responsible for many others including "Jesus Thou Joy of loving hearts," and "Jesus these eyes have never seen." At the time he was fresh from college, carrying out a teaching engagement in New York, and after he had written it, rumour had it that the verses had been coined from a German poem on the subject of the Cross. This, quite naturally, caused some indignation with Mr. Palmer who told in a few lines how the inspiration actually came. "I gave form to what I felt by writing with little effort these stanzas I recollect I wrote them with very tender emotion, and indeed the last few lines with tears." Those were his very words and it certainly is an emotional hymn — one which has the power to control a large congregation, especially when sung to the correct setting of "Olivet," composed by a Dr. Lowell Mason in 1833. It is rather interesting to learn that Ray Palmer had carried the verses about with him in his pocket for 3 years before he accidentally met up with Dr. Mason, who was at the time compiling a new hymn book called "Spiritual Songs for Social Worship." The verses were very attractive to Dr. Mason and he set out at once to write the tune we have just mentioned, and which has remained with it ever since.

Ray Palmer was born on November 12th, 1808, at Little Compton, Rhode Island, U.S.A., at a time when large areas of America were still in the very early pioneering era, and when there was great need for spiritual strength and courage amongst the settlers.

He was the son of a judge and spent much of his early youth at Boston, where he was for some time a clerk in a dry goods store. Although a member of the Park St. Congregational Church there, he found that this was not sufficient to satisfy his spiritual desires whilst still working at the dry store, and so came the turning point of his career. He decided to enter the ministry.

This entailed giving up his business career and entering Phillips Academy, Andover, Mass., where he stayed and studied 3 years before entering Yale College, New Haven. From here he graduated in 1830 at the age of 22. He then became tutor at Dr. E. A. Andrews' Young Ladies' Institute and then Pastor of the Central Congregational Church in Bath, Maine.

In his later years, starting in 1865 to be exact, he was appointed Secretary of the American Congregational Union, New York, and his life and career came to end with his death at Newark, New Jersey, on March 29th, 1887.

This might not seem a particularly adventurous life to young people, but any life which is devoted to service to one's fellow men is adventurous. Furthermore it must give a person a wonderful feeling of happiness, when he can reach the end of his days knowing that he has left behind him words which have given comfort and strength to many thousands of people. This is exactly what happened to Dr. Ray Palmer—the man who rose from a dry goods store clerk to Doctor of Divinity — when he composed his immortal hymn “My Faith looks up to Thee.”

“Rock of Ages.”

Writer : Augustus Toplady, 1740-1798.

*Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee
Let the water and the blood,
From Thy riven side which flowed,
Be of sin the double cure,
Save me from its guilt and power,*

*Not the labour of my hands
Can fulfil Thy law's demands;
Could my zeal no respite know,
Could my tears for ever flow,
All for sin could not atone:
Thou must save, and Thou alone.*

*Nothing in my hand I bring;
Simply to Thy Cross I cling!
Naked, come to Thee for dress;
Helpless, look to Thee for grace:
Foul, I to the fountain fly;
Wash me, Saviour, or I die.*

*While I draw this fleeting breath,
When mine eyes shall close in death,
When I soar to worlds unknown,
See Thee on Thy Judgment-throne
Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee.*

If one were to ask a class of young people drawn from all the Christian countries throughout the world “how many of you do **not** know this hymn?” the response would indeed be very small, because this hymn is undoubtedly world famous. It is what we call an emotional hymn—that is to say its words when sung to any one of its most popular tunes have an effect on one’s deeper senses.

Perhaps it is hard for young people to understand quite what is meant here by “deeper senses,” but it is really a feeling of utter joy and exhilaration which seems to well up inside one, something which gives you inner strength on which to hold fast in times of trouble.

“Rock of Ages cleft for me
Let me hide myself in Thee.”

It has been openly stated by some of the greatest authorities on hymns that no other has laid so broad and firm a grasp on the English-speaking world and perhaps in many other countries, too, for it has already been translated into Latin, Greek and Italian. There is rather an amusing story told that when this hymn was being translated into Hindustani, the result so far as the first two lines were concerned was so unusual and farcical that the translator became somewhat discouraged.

The lines read as follows:—

Very old stone, split for our benefit,
Let me absent myself under one of your fragments.

This strange arrangement, of course, comes about by the fact that the Hindus have no corresponding words which exactly replace the English version, and so the nearest have to be substituted with the result shown.

There have been occasions when famous people have asked for this hymn on their death bed, and once when a

popular vote was taken on favourite hymns, 92% of those people taking part, cast for "Rock of Ages" as Number one.

Surely, therefore, you will be interested to hear what is supposed to be the true story of how this famous hymn came to be written.

Our story carries us into the heart of the Mendips, a range of hills of limestone in one of England's most beautiful and famous counties, Somersetshire.

These hills much favoured by holidaymakers, rise at their highest point to just over 1,000 ft., but the nature of the rock structure has given them many deep and attractive glens and clefts. In some of the caverns which abound, pre-historic remains have at times been discovered, thus making them a great source of attraction.

We go back now to a day in the middle of the 18th century. A minister—the Rev. Augustus Toplady—was taking a walk through Burrington Combe (the word 'combe,' by the way, means glen or narrow valley) enjoying the beautiful scenery and warm sunshine, when, without warning—as can so often happen in the English summer climate—a violent thunder-storm burst with all its fury over the rocky landscape.

Most of you, no doubt, have often been caught in this manner, sometimes without a coat, and a state of near panic makes one literally dive for the nearest bit of shelter. In this case the shelter happened to be a cleft in a huge rock into which the minister was glad to scurry. As the thunder rolled overhead, and the vivid lightning flashes lit up the neighbouring rocks his ever alert mind started comparing his situation with that of any human being in dire trouble. His refuge reminded him of the famous lines — "God is my refuge and strength," he muttered to himself as the lines formed in his mind, those now familiar words "Rock of Ages cleft for me." Thus was born one of the world's best

loved hymns! However—the problem was how to write down the lines on something, before the inspiration disappeared, otherwise they might be lost to mankind for ever. He was completely without writing paper, but the thought struck him that other ramblers and walkers might have taken shelter in his cleft from previous severe storms, and left something which might be useful. An intense search brought an almost negative result, with the exception of an old playing card which fortunately was dry, and on this make-do object, he managed somehow to write down the words we all love.

The hymn or poem as it was at first, was printed in the “Gospel Magazine,” and soon came to the notice of interested people who made sure that it soon became popular.

Two or three tunes have been adopted for the hymn and as these are completely suited to the message the words convey, one can easily understand why the hymn is classed as an emotional one.

The Rev. Augustus Toplady was born on 4th November, 1740, at Farnham in Surrey. He was the son of a soldier, but unfortunately never knew his father who was killed in battle, when Augustus was only one year old.

This threw a lot of responsibility on his widowed mother, but her devotion and kindness gave him a good upbringing for which he was extremely grateful. After early schooling at Westminster, he eventually graduated at Trinity College, Dublin, in 1760. It was during his stay in Ireland, that he was persuaded one evening to attend a religious meeting held in an old barn by a follower of the Wesleys, a man named James Morris.

So impressive were the proceedings, that he immediately joined this band of followers, but a year or two later his views changed considerably, and he became a member of

the Calvinist group supporters of a non-conformist—John Calvin. Here he attacked Wesley fiercely, who replied in like manner, so that we had the unsavoury spectacle of two disciples of the Christian doctrine squabbling over a matter of principles.

Came another change, when in 1762, Toplady was ordained in the Church of England as curate of Blaydon in Somerset and eventually as vicar of Broad Hembury in Devon. Unfortunately he soon became the victim of ill-health and his doctor advised a change of districts, with the result he moved to London, and became a minister of the chapel of the French Calvinists. But the end was not far away and he died in 1778 at the early age of 38. His last resting place was underneath the gallery of Whitefields Tabernacle, Tottenham Court Road, London.

It has been quoted that Toplady wrote in his time about 133 hymns, but he is really famous only through his masterpiece “Rock of Ages.” Somehow it seems strange that none of his other hymns reached the same popularity and we can only assume that this hymn was the result of sudden inspiration brought on by certain circumstances, but under normal conditions this flash of genius was missing.

“Stand up! Stand up for Jesus!”

Writer : Rev. George Duffield.

Stand up! stand up for Jesus!

Ye soldiers of the cross;

Lift high His royal banner,

It must not suffer loss.

From victory unto victory

His army shall He lead,

Till every foe is vanquished,

And Christ is Lord indeed.

Stand up! stand up for Jesus!

The trumpet call obey;

Forth to the mighty conflict

In this His glorious day!

Ye that are men, now serve Him

Against unnumbered foes;

Let courage rise with danger,

And strength to strength oppose.

Stand up! stand up for Jesus!

Stand in His strength alone:

The arm of flesh will fail you—

Ye dare not trust your own:

Put on the gospel armour,

And, watching unto prayer,

Where duty calls, or danger,

Be never wanting there.

Stand up! stand up for Jesus!

The strife will not be long;

This day the noise of battle,

The next the victor's song;

To him that overcometh

A crown of life shall be;

He with the King of glory

Shall reign eternally.

This hymn is a firm favourite with most young people, chiefly because the words have a militant note about them and the recognised tunes are all rousing and inspiring.

But how many are aware of the real story behind the hymn? It is worth knowing because it came about as the result of a tragic accident not to the actual writer of the hymn, the Rev. George Duffield, but to one of his greatest personal friends.

We turn the pages of history back now to the middle of the 19th century, at a time when public opinion throughout most of the Christian World was united against the continued existence of slavery, particularly on the North American Continent, and great efforts were being made to obtain the release of these unfortunate beings.

In some American families slaves had been employed for many years, often well-treated, and certainly well established and even though these families worshipped regularly in the Christian Faith, they did not look upon the adoption of these coloured people as servants with any feeling of guilt.

You can well understand, therefore, that it was not an easy matter to break the tradition which had gone on for so long, and it became one of the most difficult problems ministers of the Church had had to face for some time, that of denouncing the evil practice as a sin, to congregations which contained many slave owners.

This was the situation which confronted the young rector of a church in Philadelphia, the Rev. Dudley A. Tyng. He was continually clashing with its members over the question of slavery and so bitter was the feeling created that eventually he had to resign.

However, like so many movements for good, the seeds of his work had been sown around the district, and very soon

his supporters secured a large hall for him—Jaynes Hall to be correct—in the centre of the City where he continued his good work and went from strength to strength.

The art of good speaking and preaching is a great talent and the Rev. Tyng certainly used it for his campaign. People flocked to hear him in their thousands, and there was no doubt that he would very quickly have become one of the country's leading evangelists, a man who could lift people out of themselves and hold them with his powerful dynamic preaching.

Alas—dark clouds lay on the horizon, and a terrible tragedy came like a thunderbolt out of a blue sky. A few days following his greatest ever meeting, he visited a friend in the country, and as was his nature he showed lively interest in all the things around him. On this particular occasion, he was being shown a new design of farm implement worked by a mule, when suddenly, as he made to stroke the animal it shied and his arm was dragged into the cogs of the machine. The limb was completely severed, and the poor fellow died a few days later from this terrible injury leaving the world a poorer place for his death.

As is often the case, however, this awful happening was not completely negative. Out of its pain and darkness came a little sunshine. As he lay dying he sent for his great friend, the Rev. George Duffield, and asked him to pass a message through to a big revivalist meeting which was being held at that period in the Philadelphia Y.M.C.A. Perhaps you can guess what that message was? It was brief but it was destined to become famous. The words were "Tell them to stand up for Jesus."

A message whispered by a dying man can be awe-inspiring sometimes, and straight away the pattern of a hymn based on these words flashed through the Rev. Duffield's mind. A few days later he wrote down in full the hymn which is

the subject of our little talk, and read it—not sang it—to his congregation. Even then the hymn could have sunk back into obscurity had not the Sunday School Superintendent made a note of the words which so impressed him and had them printed for his children. From here a stray copy came into the hands of the Baptists, who very soon found suitable music for it and in no time at all the hymn became universally known and loved throughout the Christian world. The two best known tunes to which this hymn has been set are “Morning Light ” and “ *Stand up for Jesus.*”

We mustn't conclude our story without briefly outlining the life of the Rev. George Duffield.

He was born on September 12th, 1818, at Carlisle, in the Quaker State of Pennsylvania. After a good education at Yale College, and the Union Theological Seminary, New York, he became a Presbyterian pastor in Brooklyn, L. I., in 1840 and continued in the ministry for more than 40 years. His death occurred at Detroit in 1888. No—he wasn't famous in so far as exciting deeds or outstanding feats were concerned, but he did a lot of good in a very quiet way, carrying on with his ministerial duties in a conscientious manner and leaving his little mark in the annals of world history by the composition of his famous hymn.

“What a Friend we have in Jesus.”

Writer ; Joseph Scriven, 1819-1886.

*What a Friend we have in Jesus,
 All our sins and griefs to bear!
 What a privilege to carry
 Everything to God in prayer!
 Oh, what peace we often forfeit,
 Oh, what needless pain we bear—
 All because we do not carry
 Everything to God in prayer!*

*Have we trials and temptations?
 Is there trouble anywhere?
 We should never be discouraged;
 Take it to the Lord in prayer.
 Can we find a friend so faithful,
 Who will all our sorrows share?
 Jesus knows our every weakness—
 Take it to the Lord in prayer!*

*Are we weak and heavy-laden,
 Cumbered with a load of care?
 Precious Saviour, still our refuge—
 Take it to the Lord in prayer.
 Do thy friends despise, forsake thee?
 Take it to the Lord in prayer;
 In His arms He'll take and shield thee,
 Thou wilt find a solace there.*

Here we have the story of a man who has assuredly won himself a permanent place in Canadian history by virtue of one hymn alone which will always remain one of the best loved of all Christian hymns.

“What a friend we have in Jesus” has been so popular since its first full introduction, that it is estimated to have been printed 50,000,000 times. But first, let us hear something about the man who wrote it—a man who actually composed at least another 94 hymns, none of which unfortunately, ever became popular.

It is not a particularly happy story, in fact the reverse is the case, because it is the story of a man who suffered deep tragedy at a time in his life when happiness should normally be at its peak. But then—shall we start at the beginning—shall we go back to 1819, for it was in that year Joseph Scriven first saw the light of day. He was born in Banbridge, Ireland, about 75 miles north of Dublin, the son of an old Yorkshire family. His early education was very good, for he studied both in England and at Trinity College, Dublin, where he graduated and obtained his B.A. in the year 1842. The future looked rosy indeed! He had achieved success in his studies and had become engaged to be married, when out of the blue, fate struck him a cruel blow. On the very eve of his wedding, his fiancée was found drowned — a tragedy which was to have a marked effect on his personality for the rest of his life. He was a changed man and henceforward suffered severely from long periods of melancholia and depression.

In May, 1845, in an effort to start a new life, he sailed for Canada, but, owing to ill-health was back in Ireland again after about 2 months stay in Woodstock, Ontario. Although his visit to the New World had been but brief, it had at least whetted his appetite and two years later found him embarking again for the land he hoped would give him a new break.

This time he took a job as teacher in a private school at Brantford which nowadays of course is the location of an Indian Reservation. A short while afterwards he held a similar post at Clinton, Huron County, where he also did a little preaching. Still unsettled, he next moved to South Monaghan, and here became tutor to the family of a Capt. R. L. Pengelley who lived near Rice Lake. In all probability he would have settled happily here for the rest of his life. The job suited him, his health seemed to be improving, and perhaps most important of all, he had become engaged once more, this time to a pretty girl named Caucenine Rocke. Alas, at the young age of twenty-three years, she was stricken with a sudden illness which proved fatal, and her body was finally laid to rest behind the Pengelley house.

From this time onwards, Scriven's condition both mentally and physically started to decline. Hope seemed to have left him, his periods of melancholia and depression increased, and he was eccentric to a degree. He managed a small dairy in Port Hope, and for many years the small profits he gained from this he devoted entirely to charities in spite of the fact that he himself lived almost in abject poverty. His religious beliefs must have been deeply ingrained in him, because in spite of his seemingly hopeless existence, he had the courage to join the Plymouth Brethren — in those days a much maligned body of worshippers. Sometimes he was pelted with mud when preaching at street corners—"the preaching milkman" as he was oft called.

But very few souls could survive in sanity for long under the adverse conditions and setbacks suffered by this poor man. His melancholia attacks now lasted much longer, and one day in August, 1886, his body was found floating in a small brook flowing into Rice Lake. He was buried beside the body of his second fiancée at the Pengelley homestead, and it was never ascertained whether his death was accidental or self-inflicted.

There are several conflicting reports as to how "What a Friend we have in Jesus" actually came to be publicised, but the most popular version seems to be that in the first place, whilst living at Brantford, he wrote it for his mother during a period of great trial in her life, and at first there was no intention of its being published. By some means however it found its way into the Port Hope Guide — a local newspaper, and from there it eventually appeared in New York when a copy of the newspaper containing the hymn was used as a wrapper round a parcel. The person receiving the parcel noticed the hymn on the wrapper, and being himself a lover of Christian hymns had it published. Its popularity grew, and next it appeared in H. L. Hastings "Social Hymns, Original and Selected" in the year 1865. Then, Dr. Horatius Bonar had it included in "First Gospel Hymns and Sacred Songs" edited by Bliss and Sankey, and finally, in 1879 it was included in "Gospel Hymns by Sankey and Others."

So goes our story—nothing very exciting perhaps, but a shining example of how a man can keep his faith in face of terrible adversity, and leave behind him a monument to the Christian Faith.

A Talk on Appreciation of Hymns.

We have mentioned previously the correct attitude to adopt when one really wishes to know a hymn. It is as well to remember that although the hymn is actually two separate parts i.e., the words and the music, they should become as one to the hymn-lover. It is essential that the music adopted be of the correct style and power to suit the words—for example—we expect a dynamic marching tempo for such hymns as “Sound the battle cry” or “Stand up, stand up, for Jesus,” but a quiet, peaceful tune for the simple, prayer-like hymns of which we could quote “Jesus high in glory” as a good example. You will imagine the effect if the styles of tunes were reversed—the whole hymn would be ruined in each case.

It is very hard sometimes to impress on people how beautiful is the word part of a hymn. You see this can only be first class really because as has already been mentioned, each is the result of either sudden inspiration under certain circumstances or very hard work by a gifted person, and as you will no doubt understand, all results of inspiration are brilliant or beautiful, whilst in the other case, it wouldn't be a talent if the person wasn't gifted in this direction. It is probably much easier when young to think of the tune as being the more important factor, because it might be easy to sing or whistle without any difficulty, and really you haven't had much trouble in learning it, which is more than can be said of the words.

However, as you grow older you will most certainly begin to realise the great importance of the words. Do take a little trouble now to try and discover what they mean—start with the simple children's hymns first, and afterwards whenever you learn or hear a new hymn always make a point of concentrating on the words—the tune will come so easily afterwards and your own personal sense of satisfaction will

be the reward. Always remember that the light, easy-to-read stories you can buy and read every day in newspapers or magazines are just there for the moment—they have gone forever afterwards, because they have no depth in them—they have been written solely for one purpose—to make money—not to help people in their daily living.

On the other hand many of our great hymns have lived for well over a hundred years, and will probably live for ever. Just think of all the good, all the comfort that has come out of them during this time since they were written—how they must have helped so many thousands of people in their daily lives. How many young people they must have put on the right path of life. Which do you think are the best things to remember — to store away in your mind — the cheap everyday stories we mentioned first, or the work of the genius or talented hymn writer? There is only one answer as you must know within yourself—the hymns, of course. Let us have a look then at some of the people who have been responsible for many of our greatest hymns. We shall take one of them as being representative of a great body of men and women who have done far more for the good of mankind and for far less monetary gain than thousands of highly paid popular “idols” whose names have flashed across the headlines on screen and newspaper throughout the world.

We are going to take as our first subject, a man who has been described by many people as the true “father” of modern hymns. By the word “modern” we mean, of course, those writers during the last two or three hundred years. His name is Isaac Watts who eventually became Dr. Watts. (We have already met him when discussing the hymn “Jesus shall reign where’er the sun” and if you will take the trouble to consult your hymn books, you will observe that he was responsible for the writing of a very large number of hymns possibly 600 or more, some of which are household words to most of us. Hymns such as “O God our help in ages past,”

“Come let us join our cheerful songs,” “When I survey the Wondrous Cross,” which by the way, many consider to be his finest effort. These comprise just a few of the better known ones—there are many more—but at the same time a great number of others almost unknown which have now disappeared from Christian worship with the passing of time. But above all, as far as we are concerned, he was the children’s hymn writer, with a style of his own which was unique. As against taking the normal form of prayers, many of them were more in the style of poetry, with a moral lesson in each. A book of his hymns was published under the name of “Divine and Moral Songs for Children,” included in which were hymns for teaching industry. Others denounced quarrelling and laziness, whilst he also expressed his belief in early religious instruction for young people in a special hymn of piety.

We can quote as an example of industry:—

“How doth the little busy bee
Improve each shining hour
And gather honey all the day
From every opening flower.”

With the moral coming out in the last verse:

“In works of labour, or of skill
I would be busy too,
For Satan finds some mischief still
For idle hands to do.”

Dr. John Mason Neale, Hymn Writer and Translator.

No book on hymns could possibly be complete without a special mention of that group of people we call "translators." These are people who have devoted much of their time to delving into ancient records and manuscripts of chants and psalms written long ago in many different languages. What they considered to be the best of these were then picked out and translated sometimes painstakingly into our modern English language. In addition very old tunes or plain songs as they were often called were also discovered and combined with the newly translated psalms they made very effective hymns, many of which are to be found in our hymn books today. A perfect example of this is the case of a very popular Advent hymn "O come, O come Immanuel." (Advent, is of course, the period just prior to Christmas, preceding the coming of Christ). It is not known who wrote the words or music to this famous hymn, but we have to thank the translators and their exhaustive research for giving us both. You might be interested to learn that the tune has two names either "Ephratah" or "Veni Immanuel."

Obviously the people who carried out all this research had to be expert at several languages, particularly Greek and Latin, which were so widely used by the cultured nations of Europe in the old days. In addition infinite patience would be needed in piercing together many of the old records, which would not be written on paper with pen and ink as we do to-day, but possibly painted in some crude manner on parchment or stone.

Shall we spare a moment or two therefore in taking a brief glimpse into the life of the man who was no doubt the most distinguished and successful of all the translators—a man whose work appears in every hymn book in the Christian religion. His name was Dr. John Mason Neale,

and to him we owe such wonderful hymns as “All Glory, laud and honour,” “O happy band of Pilgrims,” “Jerusalem the golden,” and the one we have just mentioned “O come, O come, Immanuel.” Born on 24th January, 1818, in Conduit Street, London, the son of a Reverend, his father died when the boy was only 6 years of age. His mother, to whom he owed so much, gave him a good education at Sherborne Grammar School and after winning a scholarship he attended Trinity College, Cambridge, where he was soon acknowledged as the finest classical scholar of that period. Like many college students he positively loathed some subjects, particularly maths and science, and devoted most of his energies to studying religion and languages.

The human brain must have an amazing capacity for storing knowledge, when it is remembered that he mastered twelve languages, and had quite a good knowledge of eight more, which you must agree was quite a brilliant feat.

In 1842 he married a Miss N. Webster, daughter of a clergyman, but unfortunately his health by this time became so poor that he was forced to go abroad, to Madeira, where it was hoped the fresh air and sunshine would soon restore him to fitness. Even here he couldn't resist carrying on with his studies, and when he returned he was made Warden of Sackville College, East Grinstead, Sussex. Unfortunately this position was not quite what it appeared at first, as the College was in reality only an almshouse, or an institute for the poor and destitute. For the great service he gave, his salary amounted to the meagre sum of £27 per year. However, so wrapped up was he in his calling and his studies, that money hardly bothered him at all. He remained at his post at the Institute for the rest of his life, and during that period founded at East Grinstead a training school for nurses which slowly increased in size to become an orphanage and a girls' school. The name given to it was Sisterhood of St. Margaret.

Ill health however pursued him relentlessly, and he eventually passed away in 1866, at the age of 48 years. This humble man before his death, made a special request that on his coffin the following words be inscribed: "Poor and unworthy priest, resting under the shadow of the Cross."

This then in detail was the story of his life. Perhaps it is not very exciting, but behind it one can read the courage of a man plagued almost all the time by bad health; a man whose brilliance could have earned him much money, but who instead decided to devote all his time helping the poor for hardly any reward at all, save that of knowing his research and studies had given the Christian faith something which would live for ever. It is strange that in spite of his many talents, and the great use made of them, he never wrote any hymns which one could claim as famous. No doubt he put all the energy at his disposal into the amount of patient and hard work necessary for seeking out and translating old records.

It is fitting we should end his story by stating that he wrote many charming tales for children. This was perhaps natural for a man so passionately fond of boys and girls as he was, and you will no doubt agree that any man really fond of children is a good man, because by loving them, he loves something close to God.



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